



Foreign Relations, 1969-1976, Volume E-7, South Asia, 1969-1972

Released by the Office of the Historian

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON 5754

ACTION December 21, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
FROM: Henry A. Kissinger
SUBJECT: Turkish Tanks for Pakistan

Before sending instructions giving our approval of the Turkish sale of U.S. tanks to Pakistan, Secretary Rogers has asked that you be made aware of his strong recommendation that we not proceed with this transaction now but consider it during the NSC discussion of the broader policy question (memo attached).

His reasons are:

--We would get relatively little out of this in Pakistan compared with "disproportionate" damage in India which are more important. The Indians would regard this as a pro-Pakistani move. It might revive the Hanoi recognition question.

--There would be criticism on the Hill, especially in the Senate. This might be intensified when it becomes known that Pakistan is sending an anti-aircraft battalion of 600 men to Jordan with 40 mm. guns (non-US).

--Our relations with Pakistan have changed since this tank sale was originally discussed: (1) US intelligence facilities in Pakistan have closed; (2) 200 Soviet tanks are scheduled to be delivered by the end of 1970.

If you wish to go ahead, this can be done legally at a cost of \$3.7 million in military aid to Turkey. The Turks and Pakistanis would be notified of our approval, and they would then have to complete the details of the sale between them. When this kind of sale was originally discussed with the Pakistanis in 1968; the US asked that the Paks scrap obsolete tanks as they received these newer ones. The purpose of this was to try to avoid contributing to an India-Pak arms race.

The only new argument raised in this memo is the possibility of reaction to the fact that Pakistan is sending an anti-aircraft battalion to Jordan. I regard that less as a fundamental argument than as one of several arguments that will be used by those who oppose this sale. I do not believe it adds significantly to the argument as you have already heard it and feel that you could ask the Departments to go ahead with the sale.

As I see it, this decision will carry with it the unpleasant aspects the Secretary mentions whenever we do it; it will not be any easier next month, and a refusal to go ahead would be hard to explain to President Yahya, particularly after your talk in Lahore. The Paks have been promised tanks by two American Presidents.

In addition, the sale would be an elegant way to allow you to defer harder decisions on the larger issues which will come up in the NSC meeting, should you wish to do so.

RECOMMENDATION:

That you authorize me to inform the Secretary that you have considered these issues and would still like to have the sale proceed as quickly as possible.

Approve Disapprove

December 18, 1969

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

Subject: Turkish Tanks for Pakistan

I have reviewed the Turkey-Pakistan tank trans-action on the basis of word from Ankara that Turkey would be willing to go ahead if we approved a request for the sale.

As you will recall, this transaction originated with a personal commitment from former President Johnson to former President Ayub in December 1967 under which President Johnson undertook to help obtain tanks for Pakistan via a third country. As the proposal now stands, we would approve the sale by Turkey to Pakistan of 100 M-47 tanks and would provide Turkey with an equal number of renovated M-48 tanks at a cost to the United States of \$3.7 million.

This arrangement could be approved under our present arms policy. It could also be interpreted as a political gesture to President Yahya and as a follow-up to your visit to Pakistan. If we disapproved the sale, Pakistan might consider that we had reneged on a commitment of the previous Administration and had not taken advantage of an opportunity to assist Pakistan in buying from non-Communist sources.

Despite these considerations, I recommend that we not proceed with the tank transaction because:

1. We would get relatively little out of the transaction in Pakistan compared with the disproportionate damage to our relations with India -- which are relatively more important.

2. India would regard the tank transaction as a significant step by this Administration in favor of Pakistan. In the current charged political atmosphere in India, this might generate pressures on the Indian Government to revive the Hanoi recognition question.

3. The tank transaction would stimulate criticism on the Hill, especially on the Senate side. Aside from Congressional opposition on political-military grounds, we would also be criticized for our active efforts "to make the deal work," including our willingness to facilitate the sale by underwriting -- for \$3.7 million -- the additional cost for the more modern M-48 tanks which we would supply Turkey.

4. The Pakistan Ambassador in Amman confirmed to us this month that Pakistan is planning to send an anti-aircraft battalion of 600 men to Jordan equipped with 40 mm. guns. (We have decided not to intervene with the Pakistanis because King Hussain would strongly resent our action since we have been unable to meet his anti-aircraft requirements and he presumably is accepting Pakistani guns in preference to Soviet offers). Although the Pakistani 40 mm. guns are not United States supplied and will be used for defensive purposes, there is likely to be sharp criticism in 'the Congress and the press when the public learns that Pakistan has introduced the first non-Arab military forces into Jordan. This criticism will be intensified if the United States about the same time announces it is approving the sale of United States-controlled Turkish tanks to Pakistan.

5. Finally, two aspects of our relationship with Pakistan have changed since this transaction was initially discussed two years ago:

-- At that time, we still had intelligence facilities in Pakistan but subsequently Pakistan terminated the agreement for those facilities.

-- Pakistan later arranged with the USSR to obtain two hundred Soviet tanks, which reportedly will be delivered by the end of 1970.

Because of the foregoing factors I suggest that the tank question be considered in the context of our overall review of South Asia military supply policy which is scheduled for NSC discussion within the next week or two.

William P. Rogers

[Return to This Volume Home Page](#)

